



The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Someday the scales of justice will be perfectly balanced

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Though sin seems to triumph and wrong conquers right, Though lies can put justice to flight, God's truth is eternal, His Word shows His might, And He will bring justice to light. —Gustafson

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Moreover I saw under the sun: In the place of judgment, Wickedness was there; And in the place of righteousness, Iniquity was there.

(Ecc1 3:16 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", June 3, 2008)

Series: GOD DEMANDS JUSTICE

UNIT: Amos Rails Against Injustices

NEXT WEEK

**God is Not Fooled
(Amos 5:14-15, 18-27)**

God Passes Judgment Amos 2:4-8

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson examines how and why **God Passes Judgment**. The **study's aim** is to understand that God's judgments fit the sin and that, while they are in a sense punishment, they are meant to restore the sinning nation and individual to the place where they are honoring God. The **study's application** is to live godly lives and to do our part to influence our churches, our communities, and perhaps our nation toward godly living.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Solomon was the last king of united Israel. When he died in about 930 BC, his son Rehoboam, his successor, refused a request to reduce the tax load, so the 10 northern tribes seceded. In so doing, they established a separate nation and retained the name Israel. The southern kingdom had only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Judah was the larger, so that became the kingdom's name. The first king of the northern nation was Jeroboam. He quickly realized that he would lose the allegiance of his people if they continued to go to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:26, 27). His remedy was to build two centers of worship to rival the temple in Jerusalem. One such was at Dan to the north; the other was at Bethel to the south, only 10 miles from Jerusalem itself. He made a golden calf for each place, and he encouraged idolatrous devotion to the calf-gods (12:28-30). He appointed unqualified people to be priests, and he established an alternative festival (12:31-33). These actions are shocking to us, but the people of Israel had become fascinated by idols. The time had come for emphatic warnings of judgment. God's first messenger to Israel for this purpose was Amos. Amos 1:1 identifies the time period as being during the concurrent reigns of King Uzziah in Judah and King Jeroboam II in Israel. Their reigns overlapped from about 790 to 753 BC, and it is usually suggested that Amos prophesied about 760 BC. The book of Amos is third in the arrangement of the 12 Minor Prophets. The author identifies himself as a shepherd from Tekoa (Amos 1:1), which was about 10 miles south of Jerusalem. By one count, Amos mentions 38 cities or districts, so he was well informed about current events. God sent Amos from his home in Judah to prophesy in Israel. His purpose was to announce that judgment was coming not only on Israel but on surrounding nations.

Amos began his ministry by proclaiming that "the Lord roars from Zion" (Amos 1:2). The roar of a lion may be heard up to five miles away. It announces to all that this is his territory! The order of the locations cited by Amos begins at the more distant points. The first cities or nations to receive his thundering condemnations were (or were in) Aram/Syria, Philistia, and Phoenicia. Amos was aware of the atrocities of Syria against Israelites who lived east of the Jordan River. Philistine cities and Tyre were accused of selling captured peoples to the Edomites, and this suggests a thriving slave trade (Amos 1:6-10). The formula "for three sins ... even for four" is used to indict each. This figure of speech is generally regarded to mean "sin after sin." The transgressing nations and cities had reached the limit, and God was ready to act. One specific sin is mentioned in each case, and fire was promised as judgment. Each indictment affirmed that God would not revoke the punishment. The overall context suggests that the crimes had been committed against Israel or Judah. The next three nations (Amos 1:7-2:3) had historical connections via Jacob or Lot. Edom was another name for Jacob's twin brother, Esau (Genesis 25:29, 30). Inhabitants of Ammon and Moab were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew (Genesis 13; 19:30-38). An examination of the listed transgressions leads to this conclusion: God expects all nations to maintain standards of decency in the treatment of others. The nations cited by Amos were being brutal for the sake of being brutal, not because defensive measures demanded it. The people of Israel may have been very enthusiastic about the first parts of Amos's sermon. He condemned nations on every side, and his credentials as a prophet of God were strengthened as he listed past crimes and the predicted punishments. These nations were going to receive what they deserved. Some Israelites may have been aware that God often works with the number seven to signify completeness. So after hearing a series of six "for three sins ... , even for four" (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1), they may have wondered which nation would be the seventh. Surprise! The seventh nation was Judah, where Amos lived. He was condemning his own nation!

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Judgment Upon Judah (Amos 2:4-5)

Judgment of transgressions (4)

Despising God's Word (2 Chron 36:14-17)

14 Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the Lord, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. 15 The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar.

Disobedience (Eph 2:1-3)

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Self-deception (1 John 1:8)

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Following false gods (Jer 16:19-20)

O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good." 20 Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods!"

Punishments from the judgment (5)

Send a fire (Jer 37:8-10)

8 Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.' 9 "This is what the Lord says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not! 10 Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

Devour the palaces (Jer 6:5-8)

5 So arise, let us attack at night and destroy her fortresses!" 6 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Cut down the trees and build siege ramps against Jerusalem. This city must be punished; it is filled with oppression. 7 As a well pours out its water, so she pours out her wickedness. Violence and destruction resound in her; her sickness and wounds are ever before me. 8 Take warning, O Jerusalem, or I will turn away from you and make your land desolate so no one can live in it."

Judgment Upon Israel (Amos 2:6-8)

Judgment of transgressions (6-8)

Greed (Prov 1:18-19)

18 These men lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves! 19 Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.

Oppression (Ps 12:5)

5 "Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the Lord. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

Stumbling block (Luke 17:1-2)

1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come." 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.

Immorality (1 Cor 6:18)

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

Idolatry (Col 3:5-6)

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.